Construction of National Pilgrim Centre at Rameswaram (TN)

2110. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal to construct a National Pilgrim Centre at Rameswaram;

(b) is so, what is the Centre's and State's share towards construction of the above mentioned Centre;

(c) whether Government have received any proposal to this effect from the Government of Tamil Nadu; and

(d) by which date the funds are likely to be released for this project?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) to (d) Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to State/Union Territory Governments for development of Tourist infrastructure based on specific prioritized proposals received. On the basis of consultation held with the Slate Government of Tamil Nadu an amount of Rs. 50.00 Lakhs has been prioritized for construction of Tourist Receiption Centre at Rameswaram during 1999-2000.

Development of Kanyakumari

2111. SHRI V.P. DURAISAMY: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to State:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a proposal for integrated development of Kanyakumari;

(b) if so, what is the Centre's and Stale's share towards the above project;

(c) whether Government have received any proposal to the effect from the State Government of Tamil Nadu; and

(d) by which date funds are going to be released to start the work?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During the current financial year 46 projects have been prioritised by the Ministry of Tourism in consultation with the State Government for Central financial assistance for an amount of Rs. 954.60 lakhs for the State Government of Tamil Nadu. Out of Ihese four projects for Central financial assistance of Rs. 148.00 lakhs have been prioritised for development of tourism in Kanyakumari.

(c) and (d) The project proposals have been received in the Ministry of Tourism. The projects are sanctioned within the same financial year provided all the formalities are completed by the State Government.

Declining Trend in Hotel Occupation

2112. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to State:

(a) whether tourists and hotel occupancy showed decline in the new millennium from previous new year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the measures proposed to attract foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) and (b) There was a decline in occupancy rate in approved categories of hotels during January 2000 as compared to January 1999. However, the foreign tourist arrivals has shown an upward trend. The reasons for decline in occupancy rate of approved hotels include high rates of published hotel tariffs in metro cities and the decline in business and conference traffic.

(c) The steps taken by the Government to attract more foregin tourists include development and improvement of tourist infrastructure facilities, publicity and marketing efforts in the overseas markets and use of information technology.

Declaration of Durga Hatkoti Temple as a Pilgrim Centre

2113. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to State:

(a) the number of Tourist Pilgrim Centes identified by Government during the last three years, their names and funds allocated to each pilgrim centre;

(b) whether Government will consider to include Durga Hatkoti Temple for Tourist Pilgrim Centre during 2000-2001;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?